received. The central server transmits the count of the most frequently matched signature

element to the electronic mail server that transmitted the just received message signature. If the

count meets a predetermined threshold, the electronic mail server marks the electronic mail

message as bulk electronic mail.

In the claims:

Please amend claims 1, 3, 5, 10, 19, 26, 28, 29, 32, and 33 as follows.

1 1.   (Amended) A method of managing electronic mail, the method comprising the steps of:

2   automatically generating a set of criteria based on contents of a plurality of electronic

           mail messages received over a network;

4   wherein the step of automatically generating a set of criteria includes, in response to

5   determining that a threshold number of said plurality of electronic mail messages

6   have a particular content, generating criteria that classifies electronic mail

7   messages that have said particular content as a first type of electronic mail;

8   receiving an electronic mail message over said network;

9   determining whether said electronic mail message satisfies said set of criteria;

10   if said electronic mail message satisfies said set of criteria, then processing said electronic

11   mail message as said first type of electronic mail; and

12   if said electronic mail message does not satisfy said set of criteria, then processing said

13   electronic mail message as a second type of electronic mail;

14   wherein said first type of electronic mail is processed differently than said second type of

15   electronic mail.

1 3.   (Amended) The method of Claim 1, wherein determining that a threshold number

2   of said plurality of electronic mail messages have a particular content includes

2

3-Cont
4

determining that at least a portion of each of said plurality of electronic mail messages

have said particular content.

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1 5. (Amended) The method of Claim 1 wherein the step of generating a set of criteria based

2 on contents of a plurality of electronic mail messages received over said network includes

3 the steps of:

4 generating message signatures for each electronic mail message of said plurality of

5 electronic mail messages, wherein each message signature includes one or more

signature elements; and

counting how many of said one or more signature elements match signature elements

8 from other message signatures.

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1 10. (Amended) A method of managing electronic mail, the method comprising the steps of:

2 a central server receiving from an electronic mail server a message signature generated

3 from an electronic mail message;

4 an electronic mail server determining whether said message signature satisfies a set of

5 criteria based on message signatures previously received by said central server

6 from a set of electronic mail servers;

7 wherein said set of criteria classifies said electronic mail message and a threshold number

8 of electronic mail messages as having a particular content;

9 if said received data satisfies a set of criteria, then said electronic mail server processing

10 said electronic mail message as a bulk electronic mail message.

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1 19. (Amended) A method of managing electronic mail, the method comprising the steps of:

2 receiving an electronic mail message over a network;

generating a message signature for said electronic mail message by applying contents of

4 said electronic mail message to a function that produces said message signature;

5   determining whether said message signature satisfies a set of criteria that indicates said

6   electronic mail message and a threshold number of electronic mail messages have

        a particular content;

8   if said message signature satisfies said set of criteria, then processing said electronic mail

9   message as a first type of electronic mail; and

10   if said message signature does not satisfy said set of criteria, then processing said

11   electronic mail message as a second type of electronic mail.

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1 26. (Amended) A computer-readable medium carrying one or more sequences of one or

      more instructions for managing electronic mail, wherein the execution of the one or more

3   sequences of the one or more instructions causes the one or more processors to perform

4   the steps of:

      automatically generating a set of criteria based on contents of a plurality of electronic

6   mail messages received over a network;

7   wherein the step of automatically generating a set of criteria includes, in response to

8   determining that a threshold number of said plurality of electronic mail messages

9   have a particular content, generating criteria that classifies electronic mail

10   messages that have said particular content as a first type of electronic mail;

11   receiving an electronic mail message over said network;

12   determining whether said electronic mail message satisfies said set of criteria;

13   if said electronic mail message satisfies said set of criteria, then processing said electronic

14   mail message as said first type of electronic mail; and

15   if said electronic mail message does not satisfy said set of criteria, then processing said

16   electronic mail message as a second type of electronic mail;

17   wherein said first type of electronic mail is processed differently than said second type of

18   electronic mail.

1   28.   (Amended) The computer-readable medium of Claim 26 wherein determining that a

2   threshold number of said plurality of electronic mail messages have a particular content

3   includes determining that at least a portion of each of said plurality of electronic mail

4   messages have said particular content.

1   29.   (Amended) A computer-readable medium carrying one or more sequences of one or

2   more instructions for managing electronic mail, wherein the execution of the one or more

3   sequences of the one or more instructions causes the one or more processors to perform

4   the steps of:

5   a central server receiving from an electronic mail server a message signature generated

6   from an electronic mail message;

7   an electronic mail server determining whether said message signature satisfies a set of

8   criteria based on message signatures previously received by said central server

9   from a set of electronic mail servers; and

10   wherein said set of criteria classifies said electronic mail message and a threshold number

11   of electronic mail messages as having a particular content;

12   if said received data satisfies a set of criteria, then said electronic mail server processing

13   said electronic mail message as a bulk electronic mail message.

1   32.   (Amended) A computer-readable medium carrying one or more sequences of one or more

2   instructions for managing electronic mail, wherein the execution of the one or more

3   sequences of the one or more instructions causes the one or more processors to perform

4   the steps of:

5   receiving an electronic mail message over a network;

6   generating a message signature for said electronic mail message by applying contents of

7   said electronic mail message to a function that produces said message signature;

8   determining whether said message signature satisfies a set of criteria that indicates said

9   electronic mail message and a threshold number of electronic mail messages have

10   a particular content;

11   if said message signature satisfies said set of criteria, then processing said electronic mail

12   message as a first type of electronic mail; and

13   if said message signature does not satisfy said set of criteria, then processing said

14   electronic mail message as a second type of electronic mail.

1   33.   (Amended) The computer-readable medium of Claim 32, wherein:

2   the step of generating a message signature includes invoking a first set of routines that

3   perform said function; and

4   the computer-readable medium further includes sequences of instructions for performing

5   the steps of:

6   receiving code from a remote server, and

7   updating said first set of routines based on said code.